

Political Science 2800 L01
Introduction to Political Economy
Fall 2019

Professor: Sarah P. Lockhart, Ph.D.
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Course Description:

“Political economy” is a broad concept that encompasses specific epistemological orientations, theoretical approaches, methodological tools, and substantive areas of study. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws on insights from across the social sciences (political science, economics, sociology, and psychology). To political economists, the economic system (involving production, exchange, and consumption) cannot be separated from the social and political contexts in which it is embedded.

In this class, we will approach political economy as a substantive topic, examining how political institutions and social structures shape the ways in which society organizes production, exchange, and consumption. We will also use political economy as a lens to understand a wider range of important public policy issues. Specifically, we examine how individual choices, mediated by political institutions and power structures, aggregate into public policy outcomes.

We begin the semester by looking at “real-life” examples in which people created political institutions (or rules) to manage markets and facilitate cooperation where it didn’t exist before: in the American West and on pirate ships. We will then learn about the major theoretical frameworks that seek to explain how economic systems work, starting with the classical economists and their early critic, Karl Marx. We will then look at other challengers to the classical approach and the rise of neo-classical economics in the mid-twentieth century.

The second half of the semester will focus on three public policy issues in the United States: housing, hunger, and education. In particular, we will see how political and economic institutions have created and reinforced racial inequalities in our society, and consider policy solutions for creating a more just distribution of resources. We will consider the ways in which existing power structures and institutions shape our choices, either facilitating or hindering these changes.

Course Objectives:

- (1) To provide students with an understanding of the major competing theoretical approaches in political economy.
- (2) To teach students how to analyze a wide range of public policy issues using the tools of political economy.
- (3) To equip students with an understanding of how structural racism continues to shape the distribution of resources within the United States.
- (4) To develop students' analytical and critical reading skills.
- (5) To develop students' research skills and writing abilities.

Course Policies:

- Class attendance is required. Students that choose to miss class will lose participation credit, miss important announcements and/or assignments, and miss lecture and discussion content. Tardiness and leaving the classroom during a class session are also discouraged.

- Laptop and electronic device use is not permitted during class. It is my experience that even the most dedicated students cannot resist the temptations to multi-task when they can. This detracts from your ability to be fully present during class discussions and lectures, and it is extremely distracting to others. Research shows students retain more information when they handwrite notes instead of type them (see Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014, posted on the Blackboard). I will make an exception for digital course readings when we are actively discussing them.

- We will utilize the course Blackboard throughout the semester. Regularly check the Blackboard for announcements, course resources, and lecture slides. I strongly recommend that students make use of the discussion board to discuss the course with classmates. We will also use the Blackboard grade book; check it frequently to make sure there are no typographical errors in your grades.

- Email is best used for short, administrative or procedural questions, and I will attempt to answer emails promptly, during normal business hours. If you have substantive questions, please come to office hours or make an appointment with me. Office hours are a time when you can ask me for assistance in understanding course material or assignments, or they can merely be an opportunity to chat about the course or how the course relates to current events, college more generally, or anything else you want to talk about with me. Do not feel like you need to have a "good" question or reason to come to office hours—you can just pop in to say hello if you want.

- There will be no separate study guide for the exams.

- If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, you need to register with the Office of Disability Services for Students (ODS) in order to request academic accommodations for your courses. Please contact the main ODS office at Rose Hill at (718) 817-0655 to arrange services. Staff at ODS can walk you through the process and arrange appointments depending on which campus you take courses. Accommodations are not

retroactive, so you need to register with ODS prior to receiving your accommodations. Please see me during office hours if you have questions or would like to submit your academic accommodation letter to me. It is your responsibility to make arrangements with me at least ONE WEEK before the relevant assignments or exams are due.

- The Department of Political Science affirms as part of our mission that we value and accord respect to all of our students. Therefore, as a matter of policy, instructors in our department are asked to call students by their preferred names and preferred pronouns. Please let me know your preferred name and preferred pronouns in person or over email.

- Exams may be made up if you can provide proof of a *demonstrated incapacity* to take the exam on the set date. It is your responsibility to notify me as soon as physically possible if you need a make-up. If you do not do this, you may be denied the opportunity to make up the exam or assignment. For example, if you miss an exam and do not contact me for 48 hours, you would have to provide evidence that you were physically unable to make contact for the entire 48 hours. Paper extensions will not be granted except in extreme circumstances. Talk to me *as soon as possible* if you find yourself struggling with the class or unable to complete assignments/exams as assigned. Note: this is a test to ensure you really do read the syllabus; please write my birthday on the same line as your printed name on the signature page: Oct. 20, 1980. The longer you wait, the less likely it will be that we will be able to find solutions to your problem. Final decisions about if and how make-ups will be granted are left to my discretion.

- Cheating and plagiarism will be punished to the fullest extent possible. For more information, see the Fordham University Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity:
https://www.fordham.edu/info/25380/undergraduate_academic_integrity_policy

- When citing sources, please use American Political Science Association (APSA) style (similar to Chicago style using in-text citations). See this website for guidelines:
<http://www.csuchico.edu/lref/pols/APSA.pdf>

Course Requirements:

- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Policy Research Paper (20%)
- Class Presentation (10%)
- Participation (20%)
- Final Exam (30%)

Readings:

Anderson, Terry L., and Peter J. Hill. 2004. *The Not So Wild, Wild West: Property Rights on the Frontier*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Rothstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Government*

Segregated America. New York: Liveright Publishing.

Ewing, Eve L. 2018. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's Southside*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Various assigned articles and book chapters. These will be posted on the Blackboard.

Assignments:

Policy Research Paper: The purpose of the policy research paper is to investigate a particular U.S. domestic policy problem, analyze it using the tools of political economy, and propose a feasible policy solution. You may choose a policy problem from one of the policy topics explicitly discussed in class (housing, hunger, and education) or you may choose one we have not discussed. If you choose a topic not discussed in class, I strongly recommend that you discuss it with me during office hours early in your research process so that I can provide some guidance. Other potential topics include:

- Health and healthcare
- Poverty
- Environmental policy
- Budget and tax policy
- Immigration
- Jobs and unemployment
- Retirement and Social Security
- Unions and labor standards
- Wages and income inequality
- The “gig economy” (ride sharing, short-term rentals, etc.)

Your paper should clearly and concisely address the following questions:

1. What is the policy challenge that you are addressing? (Provide background and context).
 - a. How does the status quo affect individuals' choices? Do these choices lead to problematic outcomes?
2. Who are the stakeholders on this issue?
 - a. What are the stakeholders' interests? How might stakeholders gain or lose from a particular policy change?
 - b. What power do these stakeholders have (economically, politically, institutionally, etc.)?
 - c. What potential coalitions of stakeholders exist, and how might these be facilitated?
3. What is your proposed solution? (Introduce this early in the paper and then describe it in more detail later).
 - a. What are the advantages of this policy?

- b. What effect will your policy solution have on inequality?
- c. How is this solution feasible, given stakeholder interests and power?
- d. How will this policy affect individuals' choices?
- e. What are the alternative policy solutions, and why is this one superior?

Additional resources and tips for your paper are posted on the Blackboard under the "Policy Paper" tab.

Formatting and Submission Guidelines for Paper

Your policy analysis paper should be 6-8 pages long, typed in Times or Times New Roman 12-pt. font with 1-inch margins. Papers should be double-spaced and *stapled*. You may print double-sided to save trees! **Papers must be submitted in hard copy and via SafeAssign on Blackboard as a safeguard against cheating and plagiarism.** In an emergency, you may email your paper to me so that it will be marked on time, but I will not grade papers until they are submitted in hard copy and uploaded to SafeAssign. You can submit work in class or to the Political Science Department's administrative office in 916 Lowenstein. Be sure to put my name on any work submitted to the office.

Late papers will be accepted with a 10% penalty per 24-hour period. Papers will be considered late if submitted after class begins. So, if the paper is due at 1:00 on Friday, and you submit it at 1:30 on Saturday, you will receive a 20% deduction. Late papers will not be accepted later than the day of the final exam.

Paper Presentations: In the week and a half of the semester, you will be required to make a short (5 minute) presentation to the class based on your policy paper. In this presentation, you will make a *polished* pitch for your policy solution, presenting the policy challenge and the analysis behind your proposal. Students may who are researching the same policy problem may pair up with each other to make a joint, 10 minute presentation, if they wish. The presentation will be followed by five minutes of questions and discussion with the class. A grading rubric for the presentation is posted on the course Blackboard.

Participation: Class attendance is a prerequisite for participation, but it is not sufficient to earn participation credit. The participation grade is a very significant part of the final course grade, and it will depend on several elements:

- Contribution to class discussions. I am interested in both the quantity and quality of your comments. I am particularly looking for comments that show you have read and thought about course material, and that you are listening and responding to your classmates.
- Participation in class activities.
- Postings you make on the course discussion page on the Blackboard. You can use the page to post: (a) questions about things you don't understand in the readings; (b) questions to prompt discussion in class about the readings; or (c) links or documents from outside the class that are relevant to the course.
- Maintenance of your Learning Log (see below).

Learning Log: Please purchase a composition notebook for this class, which you will use as your Learning Log. You will use this notebook for in-class activities and short assignments throughout the semester, some of which are noted in the syllabus (like the Voter Report). I will collect your Learning Log periodically to ensure that you are engaging with the material and assignments fully.

Midterm and Final Exams: Both exams will be in class and closed book. The midterm will consist of one mandatory essay question and a choice of four out of six short answer/ID questions. The final exam will consist of one mandatory essay question, a second essay question selected from two options, and a choice of four out of six short answer/ID questions.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:

Readings should be read before class on the day listed. Please bring the assigned reading for the day to each class.

Week 1: NO CLASS

Fri. 8/30: **NO CLASS: APSA Conference**

Week 2: Introduction. What is Political Economy?

Tues. 9/3: None

Fri. 9/6: - Podcast: *1619*, Episode 2 – The Economy that Slavery Built. Posted on Blackboard

- *Invisible Hook*, Chapter 1 & 2 (pp. 3–47). Posted on Blackboard.

Week 3: Political Economy IRL: The American West

Tues. 9/10: - *The Not So Wild, Wild West*, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1–33).

Fri. 9/13: - *The Not So Wild, Wild West*, Chapter 3 (pp. 34–52).

Week 4: Political Economy IRL: Property Rights & Governance

Tues. 9/17: - *The Not So Wild, Wild West*, Chapter 7 (pp. 120–137).

- *Invisible Hook*, Chapter 3 (pp. 49–85). Posted on Blackboard.

Fri. 9/20: - *The Not So Wild, Wild West*, Chapter 4 (pp. 53–76).

Week 5: Political Economy IRL: Collective Action Problems

Tues. 9/24: - Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action: Presidential Address, American Political Science Association, 1997." *American Political Science Review* 91 (1): 1–22.

Fri. 9/27: - *The Not So Wild, Wild West*, Chapter 5 (pp. 77–103) & Chapter 9 (pp. 159–176).

Week 6: Theoretical Foundations of Political Economy: Classical Economics and Marxism

Tues. 10/1: - *The Political Economy Reader*, Introduction & Introduction to the Classics (20 pages). Posted on Blackboard.

Fri. 10/4: - Podcast: *What a 16th Century Guild Teaches Us about Competition*.

Week 7: Theoretical Foundations of Political Economy: Challengers to the Classicists

Tues. 10/8: - *The Political Economy Reader*, Introduction to Economic Sociology and "The Great Transformation" by Karl Polanyi] (33 pages). Posted on Blackboard.

Fri. 10/11: - *The Political Economy Reader*, Introduction to Political Science and Political Economy and "The Market System" by Charles E. Lindblom (20 pages). Posted on Blackboard.

**Week 8: Midterm Exam
Theoretical Foundations of Political Economy: Neo-Classical Economics**

Tues. 10/15: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Fri. 10/18: - *The Political Economy Reader*, "The Road to Serfdom" by Friderich A. Hayek (15 pages). Posted on Blackboard.

Week 9: The Political Economy of Race and Inequality

Tues. 10/22: - Report: *Race and Recession: How Inequity Rigged the System and How to Change the Rules*.

Fri. 10/25: - Podcasts: *Georgetown, Louisiana Parts I and II*

Week 10: Issue: The Political Economy of Housing

Tues. 10/29: - *The Color of Law*, Preface & Chapters 1-6 (pp. VII–99).

Fri. 11/1: - *The Color of Law*, Chapters 7-Epilogue (pp. 101–217).

Week 11: Issue: The Political Economy of Hunger

Tues. 11/5: - Powers, Jessica. 2016. "Special Report: America's Food Banks Say Charity Won't End Hunger." Whyhunger. Posted on Blackboard.

- Gilligan, Heather Tirado. 2014. "Food Deserts Aren't the Problem." *Slate*. Posted on Blackboard.

- Haspel, Tamar. 2018. "Food Deserts Don't Cause Obesity. But that Doesn't Mean They Don't Matter." *Washington Post*, August 23. Posted on Blackboard.

Fri. 11/8: - *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*, Introduction; Chapter 1 (pp. 1–52).

Week 12: Issue: The Political Economy of Education

Tues. 11/12: - *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*, Chapter 2 and 3 (pp. 52–124).

Fri. 11/15: - *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*, Chapter 4 and Conclusion (pp. 125–166).

Week 13: Issue: The Political Economy of Education

Tues. 11/19: None

Fri. 11/22: None

Week 14: Policy Presentations

Tues. 11/26: - *Policy Presentations*

Fri. 11/29: **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 15: Policy Presentations

Tues. 12/3: - *Policy Presentations*

Fri. 12/6: **POLICY RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

- *Policy Presentations*

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 17, 2019, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

POSC 2800 Signature Page

This certifies that I have read and understood the contents of the syllabus for POSC 2800, Intro to Political Economy, for the Fall 2019 semester. I understand that there may be some changes in dates, readings, and/or assignments. I understand that it is my responsibility to keep track of these changes by listening to announcements in class and/or noting any announcements made via the course Blackboard and/or email.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO PROF. LOCKHART NO LATER
THAN THE THIRD WEEK OF CLASSES.